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FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9531
INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE
RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 2308
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 5769
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 9373
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 6958
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2742
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 4697
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 RANGOON 000687

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EAP AND IO; PACOM FOR FPA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/08/2019

TAGS: PGOV PREL PHUM BM

SUBJECT: BURMA: U.S., UK, AND AUSTRALIAN DIPLOMATS TO MEET
WITH AUNG SAN SUU KYI OCTOBER 9 TO DISCUSS SANCTIONS

REF: A. RANGOON 664

1B. RANGOON 682

Classified By: CDA, a.i. Tom Vajda for Reasons 1.4 (b) & (d)

Summary

11. (C) The GOB on October 8 informed Chiefs of Mission (COM) from the U.S., UK, and Australia that they will be permitted to meet as a group with Aung San Suu Kyi (ASSK) on October 9 to discuss sanctions. No other topics may be raised. The meeting follows ASSK's recent letter to Than Shwe on sanctions (Ref A), in which she asked to meet with the U.S., Australian, and EU COMs (the UK represents EU President Sweden locally), and our own formal requests to see her in response. Post seeks Department guidance in advance of the meeting; see para 11. End Summary.

ASSK Meeting Granted, with Conditions

12. (C) MOFA Director General for Training and Research Paw Lwin Sein -- the senior MOFA official stationed in Rangoon -- called in CDA, a.i., UK Ambassador Heyn, and Australian CDA Starr October 8 to report that the GOB had "favored" each Embassy's request and granted a group meeting with Aung San Suu Kyi to discuss sanctions. The meeting will take place October 9 at Sein Lei Kan Tha Government Guesthouse, near the U.S. Embassy.

13. (C) Paw Lwin Sein, reading from notes, listed several conditions for the meeting:

-- Each Embassy can send only one representative.

-- Participants may only discuss topics directly related to "sanctions and embargoes" against Burma.

-- The GOB will have "observers" at the meeting.

-- If the discussion moves beyond sanctions, the meeting will be "terminated."

-- Embassy representatives can bring ASSK documents related

to sanctions, but nothing else. Paw Lwin Sein specifically mentioned that tapes, CDs, and DVDs are unacceptable.

¶4. (C) Paw Lwin Sein concluded his presentation by describing the GOB's approval of the meeting as a gesture of goodwill, adding that he hoped it would lead to "good results."

¶5. (C) In response, the three diplomats welcomed the opportunity to meet with ASSK but stressed the need for latitude in discussing sanctions with her. UK Ambassador Heyn remarked, for example, that for the UK humanitarian assistance and sanctions are related. CDA noted that sanctions are an element of the United States' recently completed Burma policy review and must be discussed as part of that broader context. CDA also urged the GOB to refrain from setting a time limit for the meeting. Paw Sein Lwin acknowledged these points and it appears he will pass them on to Nay Pyi Taw. Paw Sein Lwin also said he does not anticipate press at the meeting -- though the GOB's past practice leads Post to believe state-run television and print media will likely be present to cover at least the beginning of the session.

¶6. (C) Later in the day, MOFA Protocol Director Maung Maung informed CDA that the meeting with ASSK will be limited to one hour and that he and an unnamed Home Affairs official will be the GOB observers. He also said that any documents for ASSK must be conveyed through him and that CDA should bring a second set for the government. Maung Maung refused

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to be drawn out on whether authorities will vet or censor the materials prior to passing them to ASSK.

Coordinating Approaches

¶7. (C) Heyn, Starr, and CDA met separately October 8 to coordinate our approaches to the ASSK meeting. Our collective view is to invite ASSK to lead off the meeting, and to key our comments to her questions and interests. Each of us will be prepared to provide an overview of our respective government's sanctions, and to seek to discuss them in terms of our overall policies toward Burma. However, we agreed on the priority of soliciting ASSK's perspective on sanctions (and other topics if possible), as well as her letter to Than Shwe and her two recent conversations with Liaison Minister Aung Kyi. (Note: ASSK met with Aung Kyi October 3 (Ref B) and October 7; details of both sessions are as yet unavailable. ASSK's lawyers expect to meet with her October 8.)

¶8. (C) We also discussed press guidance and the need to coordinate public comments. We will meet again immediately before the October 9 ASSK meeting to review overnight guidance from capitals and finalize approaches on the meeting and press.

Additional Background

¶9. (C) Charge Dinger accompanied Senator Webb when the latter met with ASSK on August 15, 2009 during his Burma visit. To the best of our knowledge, prior to that session, no U.S. official had met with ASSK since 2003.

¶10. (C) Although Paw Lwin Sein made no direct connection, it is clear this meeting stems from ASSK's September 26 letter to Than Shwe. In that correspondence she proposed to cooperate to lift sanctions pending an understanding of the "facts about sanctions," their economic impact, and the views of those countries that impose them; she also asked to meet specifically with the U.S. Charge, the Ambassador representing the EU (currently the UK), and the Australian Ambassador, as well as with members of the National League

for Democracy. Subsequently, Post coordinated with the UK and Australian Embassies to seek individual meetings with ASSK, linking the requests directly to her letter to Than Shwe.

Guidance Request

¶11. (C) Post seeks overnight Washington guidance for the meeting with ASSK and for the press.

VAJDA